

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3625 for the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)
From: David L. Litchlitter
Date: May 18, 2010
Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications
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RFP Number 3625 is hereby amended as outlined below. Revised Excel spreadsheets for Attachments A and D (Experience Information and Reference Workbooks) are posted with this Memorandum to reflect the RFP revisions in items 3 through 10 below.

1. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Item 6.7 is being modified to read:

6.7 The awarded Vendor must track in an electronic format suitable for export/import, retain for the duration of the contract, and provide to MDE upon request, at a minimum, the following data about each event (trouble ticket, project, assignment, etc.):

2. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Items 6.7.10 and 6.7.11 are being added.

6.7.10 Mileage (round trip)

6.7.11 Other Expenses (dollar amount and description)

3. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Item 7.16.2.3 is deleted.

	Technical Skill Set	Requirement
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	Technical Skill Set	Requirement
7.16.2.3	Certified Novell Engineer (CNE) with relevant work experience	3 years

4. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Item 7.16.2.4 is being modified to read:

	Technical Skill Set	Requirement
7.16.2.4	<u>Microsoft Certification:</u> Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) <u>or</u> <u>Microsoft Certified IT Professional Server Administrator (MCITP-SA)</u> <u>or</u> <u>Microsoft Certified IT Professional Enterprise Administrator (MCITP-EA)</u> with relevant work experience	<u>Submit proof of a valid certificate</u> 3 years

5. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Item 7.16.2.5 is being modified to read:

	Technical Skill Set	Requirement
7.16.2.5	Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), with relevant work experience including, but not limited to, connecting into routers via PCs and laptops, examining interfaces, pinging and tracing routes; and basic IP configuration	<u>Submit proof of a valid certificate</u> 3 years

6. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Item 7.16.4.4 is being added.

7.16.4 Individual(s) proposed may be given additional consideration for the following skills.

	Technical Skill Set	Requirement
	and laptops, examining interfaces, pinging and tracing routes; and basic IP configuration	

10. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Item 9.8.4.3 is being added.

9.8.4 Individual(s) proposed may be given additional consideration for the following skills.

	Technical/Business Skill Set
9.8.4.3	Certified Novell Engineer (CNE) with relevant work experience – submit proof of a valid certificate

11. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Item 9.9.1.1 is being added.

9.9.1.1 The State does not guarantee any specific volume of work for the awarded individual(s).

12. Section VII. Technical Specifications, Items 11.1 and 11.2 are being modified to read:

11.1 ITS will use the following categories and point allocations in evaluating responses to this RFP. All information provided by the Vendors, as well as any other information available to the evaluation team, will be used to evaluate the proposals.

Proposal Option #1: Staffing Model	
Category	Points
Non-Cost Factors	
Vendor Qualifications and Experience	5
Individual's Experience	10
Interview	25
Total Possible Points for Non-Cost Factors	40
Cost	60
Total Possible Base Points	100
Value Add	5
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE POINTS	105

Proposal Option #2: Alternative Model	
Category	Points
Non-Cost Factors	
Vendor Qualifications and Experience	20
Functional/Technical Proposal	20
Total Possible Points for Non-Cost Factors	40
Cost	60
Total Possible Base Points	100
Value Add	5
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE POINTS	105

Proposal Option #3: Time & Materials Model	
Category	Points
Non-Cost Factors	
Vendor Qualifications and Experience	5
Individual's Experience	10
Interview	25
Total Possible Points for Non-Cost Factors	40
Cost	60
Total Possible Base Points	100
Value Add	5
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE POINTS	105

- 11.2 As shown, the sum of all categories, other than Value-Add, equals 100 possible points. Value-Add is defined as product(s) or service(s), exclusive of the stated functional and technical requirements and provided to the State at no additional charge, which, in the sole judgment of the State, provide both benefit and value to the State significant enough to distinguish the proposal and merit the award of additional points. A Value-Add rating between 0 and 5 may be assigned based on the assessment of the evaluation team. These points will be added to the total score for each Proposal Option.

13. Section IX. References, Item 1.2.2 is being modified to correct a typographical error:

- 1.2.2 The reference account must have been in place for at least 24 months; and

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. The questions are ordered based on the RFP specification reference and/or associated content. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: Section 2.37, the RFP states that a response must include a performance bond if a proposal is submitted for Option #2 or Option #3. How would the price of the performance bond be determined when the cost of Option #2 and #3 could possibly be on a Time and Materials basis?

Response: Referring to RFP Section IV, Item 37 and RFP Exhibit A - Article 37, the State reserves the right for the cost of the performance bond to be “the total amount of this Agreement.” Based upon the details of the awarded proposal(s), the State may use estimates to calculate this total amount. Vendors should do the same when preparing their proposals.

Question 2: Please confirm that the vendors can bid all 3 options, or if they wish, select which options they wish to bid. For example, a vendor might want to bid both options #1 and #2 but not options #3.

Response: Confirmed. Refer to RFP Section VII, Item 2.4.3.

Question 3: What are the state-approved travel expense caps referenced in Section VII, Item 2.4.4?

Response: Two URLs with travel reimbursement information are included in RFP Section VII, Item 7.17.3.2 (for Proposal Option #1), VII, Item 8.10.1 (for Proposal Option #2), and VII, Item 9.9.3.3 (for Proposal Option #3) as follows.

<http://www.dfa.state.ms.us/Purchasing/Travel/Travel.html>

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/accounting/travel.html>

Question 4: Section 2.4.4, Option #1 states that the State will consider two pricing models, fully loaded or rates plus expenses. What is the States preference?

Response: The State does not have a preference. Based on MDE priorities and budgetary considerations, the State will make a determination as to the most efficient means of providing this service to school districts via this RFP. Refer to RFP Section VII, Item 2.4.7.

Question 5: Section 4 refers to allowing vendors to submit no more than 7 candidates per Option #1 and #3. Is it MDE’s desire to use all 7 candidates and do you have budget for up to 7 engineers?

Response: Based on MDE priorities and budgetary considerations, the State will make a determination as to the level of service to be provided to school districts via this RFP. Refer to

RFP Section VII, Items 2.4.7, 7.17.1 (for Proposal Option #1), and 9.9.1 (for Proposal Option #3.)

Question 6: May the vendor provide named project leads for interviews, but bid the other personnel as unnamed persons who hold certain certifications and who would be subject to MDE approval after the award?

Response: For Proposal Option #1, no.
For Proposal Option #2, yes.
For Proposal Option #3, no.

Question 7: For Option #2 it states that you must have a proven success model with other customers. Does this mean a reference is required if proposing this option?

Response: Yes, a minimum of 5 references are required. Refer to RFP Section VII, Item 5.2 and Section IX.

Question 8: Referring to Organizational Experience, Section 5, is MDE looking for references only in governmental agencies or will commercial / private sector references be considered?

Response: The State anticipates receiving a combination of government and private sector references from proposing Vendors. Refer to RFP Section VII Items 2.4.5, 5.2, and Section XI Item 1.2.

Question 9: Section VII, Item 3.4 states: “The awarded Vendor is precluded from selling hardware, software and/or services to school districts with whom they are working or have worked with under this contract for the duration of this contract.” Will ITS change the wording of 3.4 to read something like the following:

“The awarded Vendor is not universally precluded from selling hardware, software and/or services to school districts with whom they are working or have worked with under this contract. However, if one or more network and/or technical support personnel provided by the awarded Vendor to a particular school district have personally written the specifications for a particular bid for that district, the awarded Vendor would be precluded from responding to that particular bid. In such an instance, the awarded Vendor may ask their personnel to refrain from preparing specifications and assisting in the evaluation of a particular procurement (per RFP Item VII.6.9.1) so that the awarded Vendor may remain eligible a bidder. In such a circumstance the project lead would be a school district employee (usually the Technology Coordinator), that “project lead” would write the specs and evaluate responses, and that “project lead” may consider suggested specifications from multiple resellers and/or manufacturers including the RFP 3625 awarded vendor.

Response: Referring to RFP Section VII, Item 6.4, the specification remains as written in the RFP.

Question 10: Section 6.4, if a vendor is **currently** selling hardware and software to school districts, will the vendor be precluded for bidding this RFP?

Response: No; RFP Section VII, Item 6.4 applies to the awarded Vendor(s) under this RFP, who would then be precluded from future sales.

Question 11: Section 6.7, Will MDE provide the tracking or helpdesk tool necessary to retain the data required by the State or is it the responsibility of the vendor to provide their own?

Response: It is the awarded Vendor's responsibility to track the data outlined in RFP Section VII, Item 6.7, using a tool owned/licensed by the Vendor. The State expects detailed invoicing from the awarded Vendor, regardless of the model awarded by the State. For Proposal Option #1, MDE will provide a trouble ticket tracking system that will also store this data. Refer to RFP Section VII, Items 7.14, 7.15, 8.7, 8.8, 9.6 and 9.7, and the specification revisions in this Amendment.

Question 12a: Must all seven personnel provided by the Vendor have the broad range of certifications and experience levels required in the Technical Skill Sets. If not, how many certifications must be held by the team as a whole, i.e. 7 CCNA's, 2 CNE's, 4 MCSE's, etc.

Question 12b: Will the state allow for the requirement of CNE, MSCE, and CCNA certifications to be met collectively as a group rather than each individual proposed having each certification separately?

Question 12c: Under the Technical Skills Matrix, will the State allow for a vendor to meet the CNE, MSCE, CCNA certification requirements by proposing a combined team that has all three certifications as a whole?

Response: Referring to RFP Section VII, Items 7.16.2 and 7.16.3 (for Proposal Option #1) and 9.8.2 and 9.8.3 (for Proposal Option #3), each individual proposed must meet the minimum experience, skill and certification requirements in total and without regard to the experience, skills and certifications of other proposed individuals. Refer to the specification revisions in this Amendment.

Question 13: For Option #3 it states that services will be on a case by case basis as needed. Does this mean there are no guarantees on the amount of hours worked per week, month, or year?

Response: Yes. Refer to the specification revision in this Amendment.

Question 14: Section 9.5, would a statement of work be required for work over 8 hours under Option #3 for any type of work done in any district?

Response: Yes.

Question 15: How would cost be figured in the evaluation process if a vendor proposed 7 engineers and another vendor proposes less. Meaning, if a vendor propose 6 engineers, their cost could be less than a vendor would bid 7 engineers. How would the State go about scoring of these two bids?

Response: The evaluation for Proposal Option #1 and Proposal Option #3 will be at the individual candidate level. Refer to RFP Section VII, Items 6.5, 7.17.1 and 9.9.1, and the specification revision in this Amendment.

Question 16: In the Cost information, you are only showing spots for 5 individuals, but yet you say a vendor can submit up to 7.

Response: Vendors proposing 6 or 7 individuals for Proposal Option #1 or Proposal Option #3 should add rows to the appropriate tables included in the RFP Section VIII. Cost Information Submission.

RFP responses are due June 1, 2010, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Lynn Ainsworth at 601-359-2750 or via email at lynn.ainsworth@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 38510